

Jackson, H. H. and A. J. Munro, for use of material held by them; to Miss Ruby Munro of Honolulu for information; and to all others who helped.

LITERATURE CITED

- BARTON, I. L. 1972. On the vegetation of the Hunua Ranges, Auckland. NZ Jour. Bot. 10: 8-26.
 BARTON, I. L. 1975. Auckland's south eastern bulwark, a history of the Hunua Ranges. I. L. Barton, Hunua, Auckland.
 HALLIDAY, TIM. 1976. Vanishing birds. their natural history and conservation. Auckland: Hutchinson of New Zealand.
 MEAD, A. D. 1930. Physiography and geology of uplands west of Firth of Thames. NZ Jour. Sci. Tech. 11: 310-318.
 ST PAUL, J. W.; MCKENZIE, H. R. 1974. The Kōkako (*Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*) in the Hunua Ranges. Notornis 21: 205-218.
 REISCHEK, A. 1952. Yesterdays in Maoriland. New Zealand in the eighties. Whitcombe & Tombs.
 SCHOFIELD, J. C. 1967. Sheet 3 Auckland (Ed. 1) Geol. map of NZ, 250 000. Wellington: DSIR.
 SILVESTER, W. B. 1964. Forest regeneration problems in the Hunua Ranges, Auckland. Proc. NZ Ecol. Soc. 11: 1-5.

H. R. MCKENZIE, 21 Estuary Road, Weymouth, Manurewa.



SHORT NOTE

PUZZLING BEHAVIOUR OF HARRIERS

During the Christmas break of 1977, my husband and I spent several days on a farm in Hawkes Bay. We noticed Harriers (*Circus approximans*) repeatedly flying low over three acres of remnant bush in cleared farmland. They flew over to an exposed ridge and watched the surrounding country. I taped the call which was a high-pitched, explosive whistle. They were much harassed by Starlings and Magpies.

In this bush under a Tawa tree (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) we found droppings and pellets and, on looking up, saw in the foliage two very large, bulky structures made of twigs, one 12 m and one 15 m from the ground which in our judgement could only be nests. We watched them for hours, concentrating on the upper one which seemed newer, although the lower was still intact. Eventually a flock of Silvereyes (*Zosterops lateralis*) hunting insects in the foliage came abreast of the upper nest and a Harrier's head appeared briefly which, by its dark colour, may have been a well-fledged juvenile. After that short glimpse no more was seen of the bird in the nest, although at dusk a Harrier circled down in that direction. We have pictures of the two nests and the Harrier in the upper one.

If these structures were indeed nests (and it is hard to know what else they could have been), this raises three questions.

1. As most records state that Harriers enlarge their nests each year, why were there two nests in this tree, both apparently intact?
2. As there was an island in a large swamp nearby, why should the Harriers choose to nest in the Tawa?
3. The Australian Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*) nests in trees. Was *Circus approximans* nesting in the Tawa because of unusual circumstances or does it nest in trees more than is realised? Geoff Moon (pers. comm.) has seen a nest at 2.5 m.

JEAN F. SKINNER, P.O. Box 60083, Titirangi, Auckland 7.